



THE MANNER OF PURIFICATION & PRAYER FOR THE SICK

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PREFACE

All praise belongs to Allaah; we praise Him, seek His assistance and forgiveness, turn to Him in repentance, and seek refuge in Allaah from the evil of ourselves and the evil of our deeds. Whoever Allaah guides, no one can lead him astray. And whoever Allaah leads astray, no one can guide him. I bear witness that there is none that deserves to be worshipped except Allaah, Alone, and He has no partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger - Peace and Blessings be upon him and his family, his companions and those who follow them in goodness.

This is a brief treatise about that which is compulsory in the purification (**tahaarah**) and the prayer (salaah) of the sick people. Verily, there are rules (ahkaam) particularly for the sick in these things (prayer and purification) which the Islaamic Law requires to be given consideration due to the condition of the sick person. Indeed, Allaah, the Most High, has sent His Prophet with the true and tolerant religion (**al-Hanafiyyah as-Samhah**) which is built upon **yusra**: the principle of ease, facility and non-complication.

Allaah has said in the Qur'aan:

وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ

"And He has not laid upon you in the religion any hardship..."
[al-Hajj (22):78]

He also said:

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ

"Allaah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you..." [al-Baqarah (2):185]

He also said:

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَأَسْمِعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا

"So, keep your duty to Allah and fear Him as much as you can;
Hear and Obey..." [at-Taghaabun (64):16]

The Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

“Verily, the religion is ease.” [al-Bukhaaree, Muslim]

He (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) also said:

“What I have ordered you (to do), do as much of it as you can...”
[al-Bukhaaree]

Based on this fundamental principle, Allaah has reduced the [amount of] religious duties (worship) for **Ahlu-l-A'dhaar** (people who have reason to be excused). This is also the case if someone is not able to perform Wudoo (ablution) for himself. In that case, someone else may help him to do so - each one according to his condition, in order to enable him to worship Allaah, the Most High, without inconvenience or hardship. Praise be to Allaah, the Lord of all the worlds.

THE PURIFICATION (TAHAARAH) OF THE SICK PERSON

- It is mandatory for the sick person to purify himself with **water**. Therefore, he must perform **Wudoo** (ablution) from the minor impurities [urine, faeces, etc.] and he must perform **Ghusl** (complete bath or shower) from the major impurities [menses, sexual intercourse, etc]. This is based upon the saying of Allaah, the Most High: **“O you who believe! When you prepare for prayer, wash your faces and your hands (including the arms) up to the elbows; Rub your heads (with water), and wash your feet up to [and including] the ankles...”** [al-Maa'idah (5):6].
- If he is unable to purify himself with water because of inability (to move) or fear of worsening his condition or delaying his recovery - in that case he may make **tayammum** (purification with clean sand or the surface soil of the earth). This is based upon the saying of Allaah, the Most High: **“But if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes from answering the call of nature, or you have been in contact with women, and you do not find any water, then take for yourselves clean sand or earth, and rub therewith your faces and hands (palms, up to the wrists only)...”** [al-Maa'idah (5):6].
- **At-Tayammum** (purification using clean sand or surface soil) is performed by striking the pure earth or clean surface soil with both hands one time, wiping over the whole face, then wiping the palms of the hands, each of them wiping the other.
- If he is unable to clean himself, then someone may help him to perform **tayammum**. The helping person would strike the clean sand or soil himself with his own hands, then wipe over the face and hands of the sick person.
- If there was a **wound** in any part of the body that has to be cleaned, then he should wash it with water. But, if the washing with water would affect it, then he can dip his hands in the water and just pass his hand over the wound. And even if just wiping over it would affect it (adversely), then he may make **tayammum**.
- If there was a **broken limb** that was wrapped tightly with a bandage or caste (that has to be washed) then he should wipe over the bandage or

caste with water rather than washing it. He does not have to make *tayammum* in this case because the wiping is done in place of washing.

- It is permissible to make **tayammum** on the wall or anything clean that has **dust** covering it. If the wall was covered with something other than surface or sand - for example: if it was painted - then he should not make *tayammum* on it unless there is dust covering it.
- If he was *unable* to make *tayammum* on the ground or wall or something that has dust covering it, then there is no harm if he puts some soil or sand in a container or handkerchief and perform *tayammum* from that.
- If he makes *tayammum* for prayer and he retains his state of purification until the time of the next prayer, then he may perform that prayer with the first *tayammum* and he does not have to repeat the *tayammum* for the next prayer. This is so because he remained in his state of purification and there was nothing which invalidated his state of purification.
- It is mandatory for the sick person to **clean his body** from all impurities. But, if he is unable then he may pray in this condition and the prayer is correct and he does not have to repeat it. This is based upon the statement of the Prophet: **"What I have forbidden to you, avoid it (completely); and what I have ordered you (to do), do as much of it as you can..."** [al-Bukhaaree and Muslim].
- It is also mandatory for the sick person to perform prayer in **clean clothing** and if his clothing became defiled by impurities then it is obligatory to wash them, or change them for clean clothing. But, if he is *unable* to do so, then he may pray in this condition and his prayer is correct, and he *does not* have to repeat it. This is based upon the saying of Allaah, the Most High: **"So, keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him as much as you can; listen and obey..."** [at-Taghaabun (64):16].
- It is mandatory for the sick person to *pray on something clean*, and if his place became unclean, he must wash it or change it for something clean or lay over it something clean. But, if he is *unable* to do that, then he may pray in that condition and his prayer is correct and he does not have to repeat it. The proof for this is the previously mentioned verse [at-Taghaabun (64):16].
- It is not permissible for the sick person to **delay his prayer until after its proper time** because of inability to perform *Tahaarah* (purification). But, he should purify himself to the extent that he is able, so that he may perform his **prayer on time** even if there were impurities on his *body* or his *clothing* or his *place of prayer* which he is not able to remove. This is due to the saying of Allaah, the Most High: **"Verily, the prayer is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours"** [an-Nisaa' (4):103].

THE PRAYER (SALAAH) OF THE SICK PERSON

- It is mandatory for the sick person to pray the obligatory prayers **standing** even if he can't stand up straight or even if he leans on a wall or a stick that he needs to hold him up.
- If he is *unable to stand*, then he may pray **sitting**, and it is better if he sits with his legs closed (crossed-legged) in the place of *Qiyaam* (standing) and *Rukoo'* (bowing). This based upon the saying of the Prophet: **"Pray standing; but if you are unable (to do so), then pray**

sitting; and if you are unable (to pray sitting), **then pray lying on your side**" [al-Bukhaaree]. An-Nasaa'ee reported the additional words: **"And if you are unable, then lying on your back. Allaah does not burden anyone except according to his ability"**.

- If he is *unable* to perform the prayer *sitting*, then he may pray **lying on his side** facing the **Qiblah** (direction of Makkah), preferably lying on the right side. If he is *unable* to face the *Qiblah*, then he may pray in whatever direction he is facing and the prayer is correct and he does not have to repeat it.
- If he is *unable* to perform the prayer on *his side*, then he prays **lying flat** with his feet towards the *Qiblah*, and it is preferable that he raise his head a little to direct it toward the *Qiblah*. If he is *unable* to point his feet toward the *Qiblah*, then he may pray however he is and he does not have to repeat the prayer.
- It is mandatory for the sick person to make **Rukoo'** (bowing) and **Sajdah** (prostration) in his prayer. If he is *unable*, then he should make a **gesture** for both of them by **nodding** his **head** lower for **Sajdah** than he does for **Rukoo'**. If he is able to perform *Rukoo'* but not *Sajdah*, then he should make *Rukoo'* when it is time for *Rukoo'* and make a gesture for *Sajdah*. And if he is able to make *Sajdah* and not *Rukoo'*, then he should perform *Sajdah* when it is time for *Sajdah* and make a gesture for *Rukoo'*. This is based upon the saying of Allaah, the Most High: **"So, keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him as much as you can; listen and obey..."** [at-Taghaabun (64):16].
- If he is *unable* to make a gesture by *nodding his head for Rukoo' and Sajdah*, then he would make a signal by **closing his eyes** a little for *Rukoo'* and closing them more for *Sajdah*. As for *pointing with the finger - as some of the sick people do - it is not correct* and I don't know if this has any basis in the Qur'aan and Sunnah or in the sayings of Ahlu-l-Ilm (Muslim Scholars).
- If he is *unable* to gesture with the head nor signal by the eyes, then he should pray with his **heart** by making *Takbeer* (saying Allaahu Akbar) and reading of the Qur'aan and making **intention** for *Rukoo'* (bowing), *Sajdah* (prostration), *Qiyaam* (standing) and *Qu'ood* (sitting) by his *heart*, knowing that every person will have [his reward according to] what he intends.

This is based upon the saying of the Prophet - which makes us to know that the reward of the sick will not be less than the reward of the healthy person if he prays according to his condition:

"If someone becomes sick or travels, Allaah records for him the reward equal to what he received when he was healthy and resident."
[Ahmad and al-Bukhaaree].

Also, the saying of the Prophet:

"Actions are judged by intentions, and every person shall have that which he intended..." [al-Bukhaaree].

- It is mandatory for the sick person to perform each prayer in its **proper time**, and to do everything that he is able to do of that which is obligatory

in the prayer. If it became difficult for him to perform each prayer in its proper time, then he may **combine (al-Jam')** *Zuhr and Asr* prayers and he may combine *Maghrib and Isha'* either combining them in the **earlier time** - whereas he would advance *Asr* to the time of *Zuhr* and *Isha'* in the time of *Maghrib*, or combine them in the **later time** - delaying *Zuhr* until the time of *Asr*, and delaying *Maghrib* until the time of *Isha'* - according to whichever may be easier for him (i.e. if it is easier to advance the prayer or to delay it). As for *Fajr*, it is not combined with the prayer before it nor the prayer after it.

If a sick person is travelling, seeking treatment in another country, then he can **shorten (al-Qasr)** the four *rak'ah* prayers so that he will pray *Zuhr, Asr* and *Isha'* as two *rak'ah* each, until he returns to his country. And it is the same [equally applicable] whether his journey is for a long period or short period. This is based upon the saying of Allaah: **"And when you (Muslims) travel in the land, there is no sin for you if you shorten your prayer..."** [an-Nisaa' (4):101].

Allaah is the One who imparts Success!